

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended): A transparent light guide plate, comprising:
a rectangular light exit surface;
a thick portion positioned at substantially a central portion of said rectangular light exit surface in parallel with opposing two sides of said rectangular light exit surface;
thin edge portions formed in parallel on both sides of said thick portion;
a parallel groove which accommodates a bar-like light source and is formed at substantially a center of said thick portion in parallel with said opposing two sides; and
inclined rear portions which are symmetrical with respect to a plane including a central axis of said bar-like light source and perpendicular to said rectangular light exit surface, and whose thickness is reduced from said thick portion toward said thin edge portions in a direction perpendicular to said opposing two sides to thereby form inclined rear surfaces on both sides of said parallel groove,

wherein an end portion of said parallel groove is narrowed toward said rectangular light exit surface symmetrically with respect to a center line of said parallel groove perpendicular to said rectangular light exit surface in a sectional shape of said parallel groove in said direction perpendicular to said rectangular light exit surface, in accordance with a ratio of a peak value of illuminance or luminance of emitted light from said bar-like light source accommodated in said parallel groove at a first portion of said rectangular light exit surface corresponding to said

parallel groove to an average value of said illuminance or luminance of said emitted light at second portions corresponding to said inclined rear portions, and

said light guide plate is formed of a single material with a uniform index of refraction.

2. (original): The light guide plate according to claim 1, wherein said end portion of said parallel groove is symmetrically narrowed such that a peak value of relative illuminance or relative luminance at said first portion of said rectangular light exit surface is three or less times as large as an average value of said relative illuminance or relative luminance at said second portions of said rectangular light exit surface.

3. (currently amended): A transparent light guide plate, comprising:
a rectangular light exit surface;
a thick portion positioned at substantially a central portion of said rectangular light exit surface in parallel with opposing two sides of said rectangular light exit surface;
thin edge portions formed in parallel on both sides of said thick portion;
a parallel groove which accommodates a bar-like light source and is formed at substantially a center of said thick portion in parallel with said opposing two sides; and
inclined rear portions which are symmetrical with respect to a plane including a central axis of said bar-like light source and perpendicular to said rectangular light exit surface, and whose thickness is reduced from said thick portion toward said thin edge portions in a direction perpendicular to said opposing two sides to thereby form inclined rear surfaces on both sides of said parallel groove,

wherein an end portion of said parallel groove is narrowed toward said rectangular light exit surface symmetrically with respect to a center line of said parallel groove perpendicular to

said rectangular light exit surface in a sectional shape of said parallel groove in said direction perpendicular to said rectangular light exit surface, in such a manner that a peak value of illuminance or luminance of emitted light from said bar-like light source accommodated in said parallel groove at a first portion of said rectangular light exit surface corresponding to said parallel groove is three or less times as large as an average value of said illuminance or luminance of said emitted light at a second portion corresponding to said inclined rear portions, and

said light guide plate is formed of a single material with a uniform index of refraction.

4. (previously presented): The light guide plate according to claim 2, wherein the peak of relative illuminance or relative luminance at said first portion of said rectangular light exit surface is twice or less as large as said average value of said relative illuminance or relative luminance at said second portion of said rectangular light exit surface.

5. (previously presented): The light guide plate according to claim 1, wherein said end portion forms an angle of 90 degrees or less, said angle being obtained by combining two angles between both sides of said sectional shape of said parallel groove and a perpendicular line extending from a center of said bar-like light source toward said rectangular light exit surface.

6. (previously presented): The light guide plate according to claim 1, wherein said end portion forms an angle of 60 degrees or less, said angle being obtained by combining two angles between both sides of said sectional shape of said parallel groove and a perpendicular line extending from a center of said bar-like light source toward said rectangular light exit surface.

7. (previously presented): The light guide plate according to claim 1, wherein said sectional shape of at least said end portion of said parallel groove is defined by part of two straight or curved lines symmetrical with respect to said center line of said parallel groove, which cross each other at an intersection as a peak.

8. (original): The light guide plate according to claim 7, wherein said two curved lines defining said sectional shape of at least said end portion of said parallel groove are convex or concave with respect to said center line of said parallel groove.

9. (previously presented): The light guide plate according to claim 7, wherein said two curved lines defining said sectional shape of at least said end portion of said parallel groove can be approximated by a tenth-order mathematical function and are convex or concave with respect to said center line of said parallel groove.

10. (previously presented): The light guide plate according to claim 7, wherein said two curved lines defining said sectional shape of at least said end portion of said parallel groove or said sectional shape of said parallel groove comprise part of circular, elliptical, parabolic, or hyperbolic lines, which are convex or concave with respect to said center line of said parallel groove.

11. (previously presented): The light guide plate according to claim 1, wherein said sectional shape of at least said end portion of said parallel groove or said sectional shape of said parallel groove is triangular.

12. (previously presented): The light guide plate according to claim 7, wherein said sectional shape at a top of said end portion of said parallel groove is defined by said two straight or curved lines symmetrical with respect to said center line cross each other and a straight or curved line symmetrical with respect to said center line which is connected to said two straight or curved lines before said two straight or curved lines cross each other.

13. (original): The light guide plate according to claim 12, wherein said sectional shape at said top of said end portion of said parallel groove has a portion parallel with said rectangular light exit surface where said intersection as the peak is chamfered.

14. (previously presented): The light guide plate according to claim 12, wherein said sectional shape of at least said end portion of said parallel groove or said sectional shape of said parallel groove is triangular, and said sectional shape at said top of said end portion of said parallel groove is a trapezoidal shape symmetrical with respect to said center line.

15. (original): The light guide plate according to claim 12, wherein said sectional shape at said top of said end portion of said parallel groove is a curved shape symmetrical with respect to said center line and convex or concave with respect to said rectangular light exit surface.

16. (previously presented): The light guide plate according to claim 12, wherein said sectional shape at said top of said end portion of said parallel groove is a circular, elliptical, parabolic, or hyperbolic shape obtained by rounding said intersection as the peak symmetrically with respect to said center line.

17. (previously presented): The light guide plate according to claim 1, wherein said sectional shape of at least said end portion of said parallel groove is defined by part of a elliptical or hyperbolic line.

18. (previously presented): The light guide plate according to claim 1, wherein said top of said end portion of said parallel groove is sanded.

19. (previously presented):: The light guide plate according to claim 1, wherein a halftone dot pattern is formed in a portion of said rectangular light exit surface corresponding to said top of said end portion of said parallel groove.

20. (currently amended): A light guide plate formed from two or more light guide plates, each comprising:

a rectangular light exit surface;

a thick portion positioned at substantially a central portion of said rectangular light exit surface in parallel with opposing two sides of said rectangular light exit surface;

thin edge portions formed in parallel on both sides of said thick portion;

a parallel groove which accommodates a bar-like light source and is formed at substantially a center of said thick portion in parallel with said opposing two sides; and

inclined rear portions which are symmetrical with respect to a plane including a central axis of said bar-like light source and perpendicular to said rectangular light exit surface, and whose thickness is reduced from said thick portion toward said thin edge portions in a direction perpendicular to said opposing two sides to thereby form inclined rear surfaces on both sides of said parallel groove,

wherein an end portion of said parallel groove is narrowed toward said rectangular light exit surface symmetrically with respect to a center line of said parallel groove perpendicular to said rectangular light exit surface in a sectional shape of said parallel groove in said direction perpendicular to said rectangular light exit surface, in accordance with a ratio of a peak value of illuminance or luminance of emitted light from said bar-like light source accommodated in said parallel groove at a first portion of said rectangular light exit surface corresponding to said parallel groove to an average value of said illuminance or luminance of said emitted light at second portions corresponding to said inclined rear portions, and

~~wherein~~ said two or more light guide plates are connected with each other at said thin edge portions thereof, and

said two or more light guide plates are formed of a single material with a uniform index of refraction.

21. (currently amended): A planar lighting device comprising:
a light guide plate, comprising:
a rectangular light exit surface;
a thick portion positioned at substantially a central portion of said rectangular light exit surface in parallel with opposing two sides of said rectangular light exit surface;
thin edge portions formed in parallel on both sides of said thick portion;
a parallel groove which accommodates a bar-like light source and is formed at substantially a center of said thick portion in parallel with said opposing two sides; and
inclined rear portions which are symmetrical with respect to a plane including a central axis of said bar-like light source and perpendicular to said rectangular light exit surface,

and whose thickness is reduced from said thick portion toward said thin edge portions in a direction perpendicular to said opposing two sides to thereby form inclined rear surfaces on both sides of said parallel groove,

wherein an end portion of said parallel groove is narrowed toward said rectangular light exit surface symmetrically with respect to a center line of said parallel groove perpendicular to said rectangular light exit surface in a sectional shape of said parallel groove in said direction perpendicular to said rectangular light exit surface, in accordance with a ratio of a peak value of illuminance or luminance of emitted light from said bar-like light source accommodated in said parallel groove at a first portion of said rectangular light exit surface corresponding to said parallel groove to an average value of said illuminance or luminance of said emitted light at second portions corresponding to said inclined rear portions;

a bar-like light source accommodated in said parallel groove of said light guide plate;

a reflector provided behind said bar-like light source to cover said parallel groove;

a reflective sheet provided on said inclined rear surfaces of said inclined rear portions on both sides of said thick portion of said light guide plate; and

a diffusion sheet arranged on said rectangular light exit surface of said light guide plate,

and

said light guide plate is formed of a single material with a uniform index of refraction.

22. (original): The planar lighting device according to claim 21, further comprising a prism sheet arranged between said rectangular light exit surface of said light guide plate and said diffusion sheet.

23. (previously presented): The planar lighting device according to claim 21, wherein a ratio of a peak value of relative illuminance or luminance at a first portion of said rectangular light exit surface of said light guide plate to an average value of relative illuminance or luminance at a second portion of said rectangular light exit surface is determined in accordance with a permissible gap between said rectangular light exit surface of said light guide plate and said diffusion sheet, or a permissible thickness of said planar lighting device.

24. (currently amended): A liquid crystal display device, comprising:
a backlight unit including a planar lighting device;
a liquid crystal display panel arranged on a light exit surface side of said backlight unit;
and
a drive unit driving said backlight unit and said liquid crystal display panel,
wherein said planar lighting device comprises:
a light guide plate, comprising:
a rectangular light exit surface;
a thick portion positioned at substantially a central portion of said rectangular light exit surface in parallel with opposing two sides of said rectangular light exit surface;
thin edge portions formed in parallel on both sides of said thick portion;
a parallel groove which accommodates a bar-like light source and is formed at substantially a center of said thick portion in parallel with said opposing two sides; and
inclined rear portions which are symmetrical with respect to a plane including a central axis of said bar-like light source and perpendicular to said rectangular light exit surface, and whose thickness is reduced from said thick portion toward said thin edge portions in a

direction perpendicular to said opposing two sides to thereby form inclined rear surfaces on both sides of said parallel groove,

wherein an end portion of said parallel groove is narrowed toward said rectangular light exit surface symmetrically with respect to a center line of said parallel groove perpendicular to said rectangular light exit surface in a sectional shape of said parallel groove in said direction perpendicular to said rectangular light exit surface, in accordance with a ratio of a peak value of illuminance or luminance of emitted light from said bar-like light source accommodated in said parallel groove at a first portion of said rectangular light exit surface corresponding to said parallel groove to an average value of said illuminance or luminance of said emitted light at second portions corresponding to said inclined rear portions;

a bar-like light source accommodated in said parallel groove of said light guide plate;

a reflector provided behind said bar-like light source to cover said parallel groove;

a reflective sheet provided on said inclined rear surfaces of said inclined rear portions on both sides of said thick portion of said light guide plate; and

a diffusion sheet arranged on said rectangular light exit surface of said light guide plate,

and

said light guide plate is formed of a single material with a uniform index of refraction.

25. (new): A method of forming a transparent light guide plate, wherein the transparent light guide plate comprises a rectangular light exit surface, the method comprising:
forming a thick portion positioned at substantially a central portion of said rectangular light exit surface in parallel with opposing two sides of said rectangular light exit surface;
forming thin edge portions in parallel on both sides of said thick portion;

forming a parallel groove which accommodates a bar-like light source and is formed at substantially a center of said thick portion in parallel with said opposing two sides; and

forming inclined rear portions which are symmetrical with respect to a plane including a central axis of said bar-like light source and perpendicular to said rectangular light exit surface, and whose thickness is reduced from said thick portion toward said thin edge portions in a direction perpendicular to said opposing two sides to thereby form inclined rear surfaces on both sides of said parallel groove; and

narrowing an end portion of said parallel groove toward said rectangular light exit surface symmetrically with respect to a center line of said parallel groove perpendicular to said rectangular light exit surface in a sectional shape of said parallel groove in said direction perpendicular to said rectangular light exit surface, based on a ratio of a peak value of illuminance or luminance of emitted light from said bar-like light source accommodated in said parallel groove at a first portion of said rectangular light exit surface corresponding to said parallel groove to an average value of said illuminance or luminance of said emitted light at second portions corresponding to said inclined rear portions.

26. (new): The method according to claim 25, wherein said peak value of relative illuminance or relative luminance at said first portion of said rectangular light exit surface is three or less times as large as said average value of said relative illuminance or relative luminance at said second portions of said rectangular light exit surface.